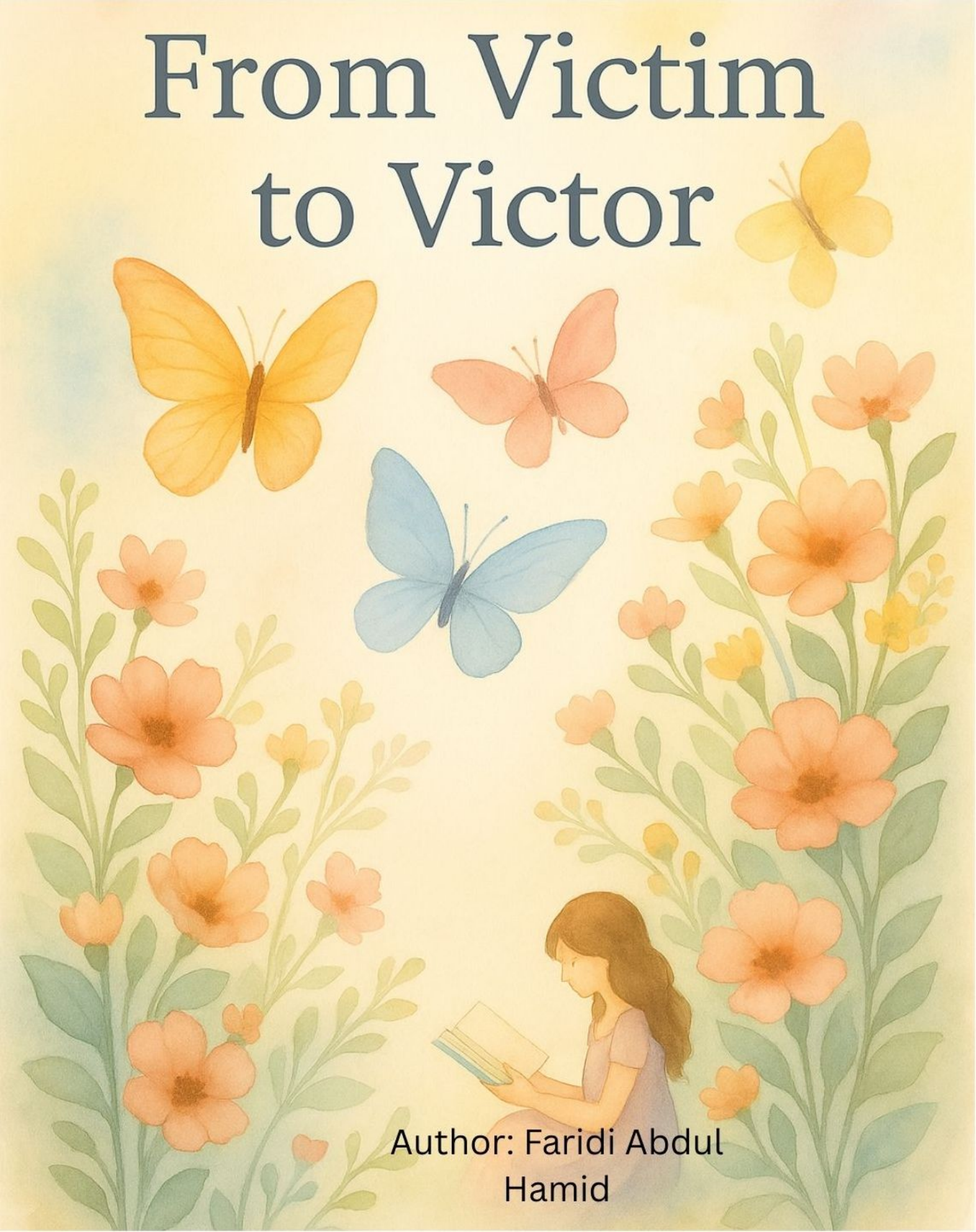
From Victim to Victor



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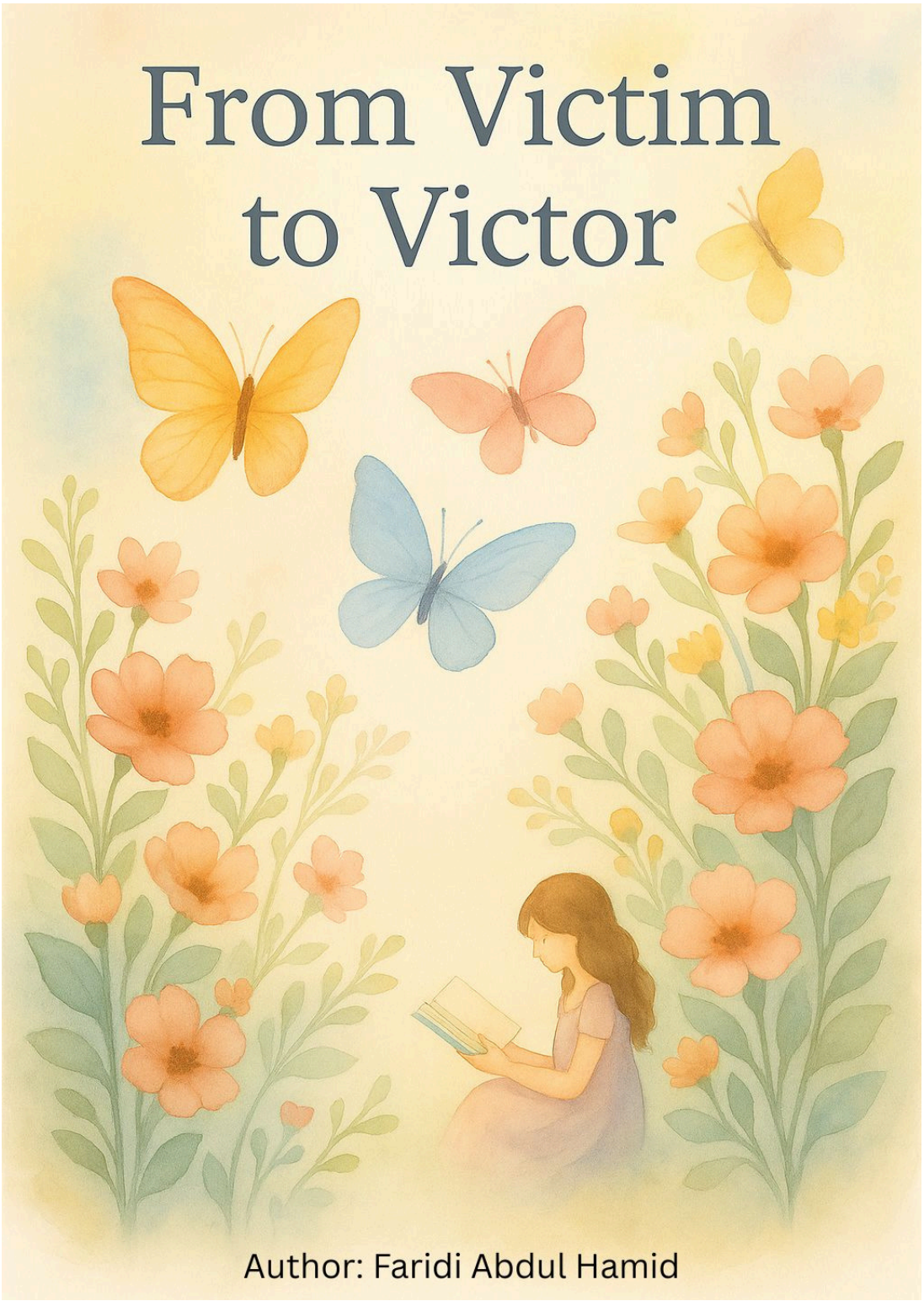

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Chapter 1

Abigail's Childhood – The First Shadows

Abigail always remembered her childhood as a place full of contrasts. Her house, a small cream-colored structure in a quiet neighborhood of Aruba, seemed at first glance like a warm home: clothes hanging in the sun, the smell of sweet bread from the neighbor, and the distant laughter of children playing in the street. Yet inside, there was a persistent sense of silence that no outside noise could dispel.

Her mother worked long hours and came home exhausted, almost always with swollen feet and her gaze lost in the window. Her grandmother, a strong woman with a gentle character, was the one who cared for her most. Abigail followed her like a little hummingbird, observing every gesture.

"Grandma, why does the house sometimes feel so quiet? " Abigail asked one day, while they were eating sweet bread together.

Her grandmother looked at her tenderly, but her eyes carried a weariness the girl did not fully understand. "My child, sometimes silence protects us... and other times it hides things. But you have light, and that light will always find a way out."

Abigail didn't completely understand, but she kept those words as one keeps a key without yet knowing which door it will open.

A Secret Universe

To escape the silence, Abigail created a small refuge:a corner under a tamarind tree behind the house.There she drew butterflies, women with wings, giant moons, and colorful dams.

For her, butterflies were symbols of something she couldn't explain but felt deeply: the idea that even the most fragile things could fly.

Sometimes, her neighbor Carmen, a sweet woman with a calm voice, would come by with a plate of cookies."What are you drawing today, my love?""A world where no one is afraid."

Carmen looked at her in silence, knowing that such a phrase was not normal for a nine-year-old girl.

The Day Everything Changed

Abigail was nine years old when her world shattered—not suddenly, but like a glass falling to the floor, breaking into fine, almost invisible pieces, impossible to put back together.

That afternoon, the sun came through the window with a warm glow. The house was quiet, too quiet. Abigail heard familiar footsteps. It was someone who was supposed to protect her, someone she knew, someone the family trusted.

But what happened that day was something her body would remember with cruel precision, while her mind tried to bury it in a dark corner.

There were no screams. Only silence.A silence that clung to her skin for years.

After it happened, Abigail didn't say a word.She didn't cry. She didn't ask. She didn't understand.But something had changed.

As if her drawings had lost their color, as if the tree no longer protected her, as if the world had forgotten how to hold her.

The Girl Who Stopped Smiling

Her grandmother was the first to notice."Abigail, my love... are you okay?"Abigail nodded.

But her grandmother knew that a child's soul does not fade without reason.

Abigail's smile, the one that used to appear even at the sight of a yellow butterfly, became rare. Her eyes avoided contact. She no longer drew women with wings, but shapeless shadows.

She became quieter, more alert, as if waiting for something bad to happen again.

Carmen noticed too, and one day sat beside her.“If you ever need to talk, my door is always open.”

Abigail wanted to talk.But something inside her told her she shouldn’t. That maybe it was her fault. That maybe no one would believe her.

So she began to write.In the margins of her notebooks, on loose sheets, on napkins—anywhere.Clumsy words. Strange drawings.Small cracks of a truth she didn’t yet know how to say.

The Inner Voice Awakens

One night, Abigail dreamed of a blue butterfly landing on her hand.The butterfly spoke in a soft voice:“Your story does not end here.”

When she woke up, she felt something different:a small spark, barely perceptible, but enough.

She didn’t yet know that this dream would be the beginning of her path toward healing.

Guided Reflection – Chapter 1

Question for your heart: What part of your childhood still weighs in your silence?

Exercise: Write a letter to your “child self,” telling her something she needed to hear at that moment.It doesn’t matter if you cry, if you tremble, or if you can’t find the perfect words.It is an act of love, not of perfection.

Chapter 2

Abigail’s Adolescence — Between Shadows and Light

Abigail’s adolescence began like a strange dawn: not entirely dark, but not bright enough either.At thirteen, her body was growing, her face was changing, but inside her still lived the frightened child who had kept silent for so long.

There were days when she laughed with her friends for no apparent reason, as if the world were light.And other days, sitting in the same classroom chair, she felt a pressure in her chest she couldn’t explain.

Her teachers said she was “introverted,”her classmates said she was “too serious,”but no one saw what was happening behind those brown eyes that avoided looking at anyone for too long.

Poems in the Margins

Abigail didn’t speak.Not with words.But she wrote.

Her notebooks were full of phrases that looked like broken drawings:

- “Butterfly trapped in a jar.”
- “I wish I could sleep without remembering.”
- “My voice weighs too much.”

Sometimes she wrote small stories: girls who lost their wings, dams without water, moons that never rose. They were metaphors hiding truths she didn’t know how to face.

One afternoon, while writing alone at a table in the schoolyard, a classmate named Jeandra approached her.“You always write beautiful things... can I see?”

Abigail pressed the notebook against her chest, almost in fear.“No... it’s not beautiful.”

Jeandra looked at her with a mix of curiosity and affection.“Sometimes what hurts is also beautiful... when you write it.”

Abigail observed her for a moment.No one had ever said something like that before.A part of her felt that someone finally saw her.

The Echo of the Past

At fourteen, something inside Abigail began to break.It wasn’t physical pain, but a constant tension:fear of closed spaces, fear of shouting, fear of someone coming too close.

Nights were difficult.She dreamed of shadows chasing her, of doors she couldn’t open, of her voice trapped inside her own body.

Her mother didn’t know what to do.One day, frustrated, she asked:“Why do you cry for no reason, Abigail?”

But Abigail did have a reason.She simply didn’t know how to say it.

The First Crack: A Crisis

At fifteen, during class, her breathing began to quicken.The lights became too bright,the whispers too loud,the walls too close.

“Teacher... I don’t feel well.”

She ran to the bathroom, where she collapsed on the floor, trembling.It was a panic attack.But she didn’t know what that was.She only knew that something inside her was asking for help.

It took almost an hour before she could calm down.When she came out, her neighbor Carmen was there—she had been called by the school.

“My child... breathe with me.”Carmen took her hand, guiding her breathing.Abigail cried, for the first time in a long while, without fully understanding why.

The Day She Heard Her Story in Another Voice

Weeks later, Carmen, worried, took her to a youth support group.The room was small, with chairs in a circle.There were six other girls, all around her age.

Abigail sat with her arms crossed, staring at the floor.The first to speak was a girl named Daphne.

“I was nine years old... and I didn’t know how to say it.”

Abigail looked up suddenly.Daphne continued, her voice trembling:“I thought it was my fault. I didn’t say anything until years later. But... today I’m learning to heal.”

Abigail felt the air stop.It was like hearing her own story but spoken with courage by someone else.

That day she didn’t speak.But for the first time, she didn’t feel alone.

The First Step Toward Her Voice

A month later, something unexpected happened.The group was gathered.The therapist asked:“Does anyone want to share something today?”

There was silence.Then Abigail raised her hand.Her heart pounded in her chest as if it wanted to escape.

“I...” she said, barely audible.Everyone looked at her with respect.“I... was also nine years old.”

Her voice broke.A tear fell.Then another.

But no one interrupted her.No one pressured her.They just listened.

And for the first time in her life, speaking didn’t hurt as much as staying silent.

The Beginning of Inner Reconstruction

From that moment, something in Abigail began to change.It wasn’t a fast or simple transformation,but it was real.

She began to write not only to escape,but to understand herself.To explain herself.To tell herself she deserved love.

Her poems began to change.They no longer spoke only of shadows,but also of sunrises.

Guided Reflection – Chapter 2

Deep Question: What was the first thing that made you feel you were not alone?

Exercise: Write a list of people, places, or moments where you felt seen, heard, or understood.Even if it was only once.Even if it was brief.That spark counts.

Chapter 3

Abigail's Adulthood — From Pain to Action

Early adulthood arrived for Abigail as a mix of freedom and fear.She had left behind the school hallways, the homework, the notebooks filled with hidden poems.But at the same time, life seemed to demand answers she did not yet have.

At twenty, Abigail moved into a small apartment near the university.The walls were thin, the furniture borrowed, and the kitchen tiny,but for her it represented a new universe:a space where she could learn who she was without the shadows of the past so close.

She enrolled in Social Work.She wanted to understand others, but also—though she didn't say it aloud—she wanted to understand herself.

The First Class That Changed Her Life

The classroom was full of young people with new folders and curious eyes.The professor entered: a man in his fifties, with a calm gaze and a deep voice.

"Welcome. I want to begin this class with a phrase:No one can truly help others if they first do not learn to look at themselves."

That phrase pierced Abigail as if it had been written for her.

During the class, they began to talk about trauma, resilience, emotional support.Abigail took notes with an intensity that drew attention.

"It seems you're very interested in the subject," the professor said at the end."Yes, professor... I think... I've lived it closely."

The professor nodded respectfully, without asking for details, without pressing.That silent acceptance was the first gesture of dignity Abigail received as an adult.

The First Workshop — and the First Revelation

During her second year, the university organized a community workshop for women survivors of violence.Students could attend as observers.

Abigail hesitated.The very title of the event tied a knot in her stomach.But something stronger inside her pushed her to go.

The room was full.There were young women, adults, mothers, grandmothers.Each with her own story.

The facilitator asked:"Does anyone want to share how their healing process began?"

A woman with curly hair raised her hand.“When I discovered I wasn’t the only one... I could breathe.”

Abigail felt an emotional blow.That phrase... it was the same she had felt in the support group years earlier.

Another woman spoke:“The day I stopped blaming myself, I reclaimed my body.”

Another:“My voice is mine. And now I use it.”

Abigail trembled.Her diary—the one where she had written her pain as a child and adolescent—repeated those ideas again and again, but she had never believed they would one day be true for her.

That day she understood something essential:Listening to other women was like hearing lost parts of herself return to embrace her.

The Rebirth of Her Voice

At twenty-three, Abigail began to write publicly.First small texts on social media, then articles on blogs, until one day she received an unexpected message:

“Thank you for your words. They made me feel accompanied.”

That night she cried in silence.For the first time, her tears were not of pain, but of recognition.Of relief.Of knowing that something inside her had begun to bloom.

Her texts spoke of guilt, silence, healing, forgiveness.They were simple, honest words, born from her own wound.And people felt them as true.

The Breaking Point — and the Birth of Her Purpose

At twenty-seven, Abigail had already completed her studies.She worked at a support center for survivors.

One of those seemingly ordinary days, a young woman arrived crying, unable to speak.Abigail sat in front of her.She didn’t ask.She didn’t press.She simply stayed there.

The young woman, through sobs, said:“I don’t know what to do... I don’t know where to start...”

Abigail took a breath.She remembered being nine.She remembered being fifteen.She remembered her own silence.

And, with the softest voice she had, she replied:

“Start here. Breathing. I am with you.”

The young woman looked at her as if those words had stopped a storm.Abigail felt something light up inside her.She understood that her story, her pain, her

process,had not been in vain.

That day she made a decision:To found an organization dedicated to supporting survivors.

She had no money, no contacts, no administrative experience;only a notebook full of ideas and an immense heart.But when a woman discovers her purpose,life begins to open paths.

The Birth of Her Organization

It began in a small room lent by a friend.Then she rented a simple space.The first meetings were with three women.Then five.Then ten.

Abigail prepared the chairs, printed flyers, made the coffee, led the activities.It was hard work.

But every time a woman said,"Thank you, now I understand it's not my fault,"something inside Abigail healed too.

Pain was transformed into a bridge.The wound became a seed.The story became a tool.

Abigail, without realizing it, was becoming a guide.

Guided Reflection – Chapter 3

Deep Question: What part of your story can become help for someone else?

Practical Exercise: Write three things you have lived that now give you wisdom.They don't have to be beautiful.Only true.

Chapter 4

The Importance of Seeking Help When There Is Sexual Abuse

Seeking Help — The Bravest Act

Seeking help was not something Abigail did immediately.For years, silence was her refuge, her punishment, and her companion.It was a heavy silence, one that followed her even when she laughed, when she studied, when she wrote.

At nine, she had learned to keep quiet.At fifteen, to tremble.At twenty, to avoid certain memories.And in her twenties... to function without healing.

But life has a curious way of breaking what we hide.

The Weight of Silence

One afternoon, while working at the community center, Abigail felt something strange: dizziness, pressure in her chest, a knot in her throat.She took a deep breath.Once.Twice.Three times.Nothing changed.

She stepped into the hallway and leaned against the wall.Her colleague, Michella, saw her pale.“Abigail, are you okay?”

She tried to smile.“Just... tired.”

But Michella didn’t believe her.She came closer and placed a gentle hand on her shoulder.

“You accompany everyone... except yourself.”

Abigail felt those words pierce her.“I’m fine,” she insisted, though she knew it was a lie.

Michella didn’t push further. But she left a card on the table:**“Integral Therapy Center – Dr. Mariana Wouters.”**

Abigail tucked it into her bag without looking at it.That night, she couldn’t sleep.

The Memory That Returned

Around three in the morning, a memory struck her mind with the force of a hurricane:that face, that voice, that smell, that place.

She had buried it for years, but that night it returned as if it had been waiting in the dark.

Abigail sat up in bed, trembling.She felt fear.She felt shame.She felt rage.She felt everything at once.It was too much.

And then, without thinking, she reached for her bag, found the card, and held it between her fingers.Her breathing was uneven.But for the first time, instead of running from the pain... she faced it.

“I need help.”

She said it in a whisper, but it was the bravest decision of her life.

The First Session

The clinic smelled of lavender.There were paintings in soft colors and a warm lamp in the corner.

Abigail entered with cold hands and a racing heart.The therapist, Dr. Mariana, smiled with a calm gesture.

“Welcome, Abigail. Would you like some water? Or would you prefer we start talking?”

Abigail didn’t know what to do with her hands.She clasped them.Then released them.

Finally she said:“I think... I need to talk. But I don’t know how.”

The therapist nodded.“That’s okay. Many people come without knowing where to begin. Just breathe. I’m here.”

That *“I’m here”* made Abigail break down in tears without knowing why.It was a long, deep, sustained cry.A cry of years holding back her soul.

The therapist remained silent, but in that silence, there was understanding.There was a safe space.

When Abigail could finally speak, she barely articulated:“I was nine years old...”

The therapist didn’t interrupt.She didn’t ask for details.She didn’t rush anything.She simply listened.

It was the first time Abigail had said those words out loud.A gigantic knot burst inside her.

The Power of Naming What Was Lived

As the sessions went on, Abigail learned things she had never imagined:

- That what she lived through had a name.
- That none of it was her fault.
- That her silence was a protection mechanism, not a failure.
- That her body remembered what she could not narrate.
- That healing did not mean forgetting, but freeing herself.

There were sessions where she spoke endlessly.And others where she couldn’t say a word.Both were valid.

One day the therapist told her:“Abigail, the bravest act was not surviving... it was sitting here and deciding you deserve something better than that pain.”

Abigail cried.But this time, her tears didn’t weigh as much.

A Relapse Is Not a Step Back

In one particularly difficult session, Abigail confessed:“I thought I was already better... why do I still feel this?”

Mariana smiled.“Because healing is not a straight line. It’s a path with curves, pauses, and sometimes stumbles. But every step counts.”

Abigail began to understand that healing was not a destination but a process.And that process was transforming her, even when she felt she was going backwards.

Why Seeking Help Was Her Most Powerful Act

One day, after a liberating session, Abigail stepped into the clinic garden and breathed in the fresh air.A thought appeared:“I am not alone.”

And for the first time, she truly believed it.

She understood something crucial:Seeking help had not been a sign of weakness.It had been her rebirth.The door that opened everything that would come after.

Abigail's Inner Dialogue — A Key Moment

"If I speak, it hurts.If I stay silent, I sink.If I ask for help, maybe I can breathe.Maybe I can live.It wasn't me who failed.It was those who should have protected me.I... I am still here. And that means something."

Guided Reflection — Chapter 4

Question for your soul: What is the thing you are most afraid to ask for, but know you need?

Practical Exercise: Write a list of people, professionals, or resources that could help you in your process.It doesn't mean you must contact them today.Simply recognize that they exist.Recognizing them is already a step toward healing.

Chapter 5

The Healing Path — Rebirth from Within

Healing Was Not an Accident

It did not happen overnight.It was not magical or linear.It was a process.A journey.A rediscovery.

And Abigail understood this not in the first session... but in the ninth.Healing does not begin the first time one speaks.It begins when one allows oneself to feel without fear of breaking.

First Phase: Accepting That She Deserves to Heal

During the first weeks of therapy, Abigail repeated the same phrase:“I don’t know if I’ll ever be able to heal completely.”

And Mariana, her therapist, responded with the same calm:“You don’t need to heal all at once. You only need to move forward a millimeter at a time.”

Those words brought her relief.She wanted to run.Mariana taught her to walk.To hold herself.To stay with herself without fleeing.

There were days when she left therapy feeling light, as if she had released tons of emotional weight.But other days she left with her soul in pieces, feeling she had gone backwards.

“Is it normal to feel this way?” she asked once, her eyes swollen.“It’s completely normal,” said Mariana, “because you are opening old wounds. But not to suffer... rather to clean them and let them heal.”

Abigail took a deep breath.For the first time she understood that pain did not mean failure.It meant process.

Writing as Medicine

One night, after an intense session, Abigail opened her notebook and wrote:“Today I saw my inner child.She was hiding in the corner of my memory.She looked at me with fear.I said: ‘You can come out now, I am listening to you.’And she cried with me.”

Writing stopped being an escape, and became a bridge.A ritual.A sacred act.

She began to write letters:

- To her child self
- To her adolescent self
- To the woman she was becoming
- Even to the abuser (not to send, but to release herself)

In one of those letters she wrote:“You did not take away my light.You hid it.But now I am finding it.”

It was a declaration of rebirth.

Forgiveness That Does Not Excuse, But Liberates

One day, Mariana said something that changed Abigail’s perspective:“Forgiveness is not for the one who hurt you... it is for the Abigail who was trapped.”

Abigail frowned.“Should I forgive him?”

Mariana gently shook her head.“№ You must forgive yourself for carrying guilt that was never yours.Self-forgiveness is what frees you.The other... is neither

obligatory nor necessary."

Abigail cried.She cried for the child who kept silent, for the teenager who trembled, for the young woman who pretended to be strong when she needed help.

That day she began her process of self-forgiveness.And it was one of the most transformative steps.

The Day She Looked in the Mirror and Recognized Herself

Months later, Abigail began to notice changes:Her breathing was deeper.Her gaze, steadier.Her shoulders, less tense.

And one day, without planning it, she stood in front of the mirror after a shower.She looked at herself for a long time.

Before, that gesture had brought rejection, fear, or disconnection.But that day, she saw something different:She saw a survivor.She saw a woman.She saw someone who had walked through hell and was still standing.

She smiled.Not because everything was perfect, but because she was moving forward.

A Symbol of Rebirth

In one session, Mariana handed her a small box."Open it."

Inside was a butterfly made of handmade paper, in shades of blue and lilac."I want you to keep this as a reminder," said Mariana."Sometimes we think we are still caterpillars... but we are already ready to fly."

Abigail held the butterfly, and for the first time she felt pride.Real pride.Clean pride.

Not for what she had lived through, but for the woman she was becoming.

Community Support

Healing alone is possible, but healing in community is transformative.

Abigail began attending support groups again.This time, not as the girl who trembled when speaking, but as the woman who listened, accompanied, and held others.

At one meeting, a newly arrived young woman said:"I'm afraid to speak..."

Abigail took her hand and, with the gentle voice that now characterized her, replied:"I was afraid too.But I am here with you."

And in that moment, she understood something profound:Healing was not only for her.It was for those who would cross her path.

The Hardest Exercise: The Letter That Freed Her Soul

In one session, Mariana suggested writing a letter she would never send:“Write everything your heart never could say.With rage, with pain, with truth.”

Abigail did it.She cried while writing.She trembled.She felt fear.But she did not stop.

When she finished, she felt something unsettling:lightness.

Not because of what was written, but because she had taken it out of her body.

That day she burned the letter in a metal bowl, as part of a therapeutic ritual.Tears fell, but they were tears of release.

Guided Reflection — Chapter 5

Deep Question: What part of your story are you ready to release?

Healing Exercise: Write a letter you will never send.Do not overthink it.Write from the soul.From the wound.From the truth.

Then, keep it, tear it, or burn it.Do whatever your heart needs.

Chapter 6

Rebuilding and Empowering Oneself — Abigail’s Rebirth

Healing Had Been a Deep, Slow, and Painful Process

But rebuilding...Rebuilding was something else.Rebuilding meant reinventing herself.Looking in the mirror and choosing a new version of herself.Understanding that she was not only closing wounds, but opening paths.

One day, after months of therapy, Abigail woke up with a different feeling.It was not the absence of pain —that does not exist—but the presence of something stronger:determination.

It was as if an inner voice told her:“You have already survived.Now it’s time to live.”

Unlearning What Was Learned

Her therapist Mariana was clear:“You have healed many wounds, Abigail, But now it’s time to rebuild yourself from new beliefs. The old ones no longer serve you.”

“And where do I start?”

“By telling yourself the truth.The truth about who you are today.”

Abigail wrote that phrase in her notebook:“I am not what happened to me.I am what I do with what happened to me.”

She realized that for years she had lived on autopilot:

- Saying “yes” when she wanted to say “no”
- Carrying guilt that wasn’t hers
- Feeling afraid to take up space
- Minimizing her achievements
- Silencing her voice so as not to bother others

Rebuilding meant breaking those patterns.And that required courage.

The Day She Said “No” for the First Time

One scene marked a before and after.She was at the community center when a colleague tried to assign her an unfair task, assuming she “always helped with everything.”

Abigail opened her mouth to say “yes, it’s fine,” as she had always done...but something inside her stopped.

“№ I can’t do it. It’s not my responsibility.”

The silence that followed was so great that Abigail felt her heartbeat in her ears.

The colleague frowned.“You never say no...”

“Well, I’m learning.”

That simple conversation was revolutionary.She left the building with a smile she had been waiting years to feel.

That night she wrote:“Setting boundaries is not being bad.It is being fair to myself.”

Redefining Identity

Abigail began rediscovering herself.What did she like?Who was she without fear?What did she want to do with her life beyond surviving?

She bought clothes that truly represented her style.She danced again in her living room, as she had done as a child.

She enrolled in an art course.She reorganized her home, hanging phrases that inspired her.She learned to cook for herself, as an act of self-love.

She began to treat herself as someone valuable,not as someone who had to “earn” affection.

It was the first time she consciously chose herself.

Her First Workshop as a Guide

Three months later, the community center asked her to lead a workshop for women survivors.

Abigail hesitated.She looked in the mirror and asked:“Am I ready?”

And the answer that came from within was not a perfect “yes,”but a:“I am willing.”

On the day of the workshop, ten women sat in a circle.Some cried.Others could not lift their gaze.

Abigail saw in them her past self.She took a deep breath.

“Thank you for being here. We are not here to be perfect... but to be true.”

One woman raised her hand:“And you... how did you begin to heal?”

Abigail smiled sincerely.“The day I stopped hiding from myself.”

There was a deep silence.A silence that did not hurt.A silence that embraced.

That was the day Abigail understood she had a gift:to turn her wound into words,and her words into companionship.

The Decisive Moment: Turning Pain into Purpose

From that workshop, her life changed:

- Schools contacted her for talks.
- Associations invited her to speak at events.
- Women of different ages sought her guidance.
- Her writings were shared more and more.

One afternoon, Mariana told her:“Abigail... you are building something big.”

She shook her head humbly.“I’m just doing what I can.”

“No, Abigail. You are transforming lives.”

That day she understood that every tear shed, every therapy session, every poem written in adolescence,had been a seed.And now they were all blooming.

Reparenting: Becoming the Mother Her Inner Child Needed

One of the deepest parts of her reconstruction was learning to comfort herself.

One night, after a conference, Abigail felt an old fear resurface.She sat on the edge of her bed, breathed, and closed her eyes.

She imagined her child self, that little girl with notebooks full of butterfly drawings, the one who had been so afraid.She visualized herself sitting beside her.

“I am here.”“I will not leave you alone again.”“Now I protect you.”

She cried.But they were tears of union, not of pain.

That was one of the most transformative experiences of her life.

The Rebirth of Self-Love

Rebuilding was not only about healing wounds.It was also about:

- Learning to rest
- Allowing herself to receive affection
- Recognizing her achievements without guilt
- Loving her body
- Speaking to herself with tenderness
- Celebrating her progress

Abigail wrote one day:“Today I embrace myself without fear of breaking.Because I understood that I am not broken.I am being reborn.”

Guided Reflection — Chapter 6

Questions for Rebuilding Yourself:

1. What patterns from your past do you no longer want to repeat?
2. What version of yourself do you want to begin cultivating?
3. What is one small thing you can do this week to show yourself love?

Practical Exercise: Make a list of five boundaries you need to implement for your emotional well-being.

Example:

- Not carrying responsibilities that don’t belong to you.
- Not saying “yes” when you want to say “no.”
- Protecting your energy.

Chapter 7

The Future After Trauma — A Chosen Path

Abigail Always Thought Her Future Was Marked by What She Lived

For years she believed her story would be a permanent shadow,a constant reminder of what she wanted to forget.

But healing did something unexpected:it opened a window toward a different tomorrow.Not a perfect tomorrow, but a chosen one.

One day, while walking on the beach at sunset, the warm wind and the sound of the waves surrounded her.She felt something inside align, as if there were finally space to dream.Not to survive, but to live.

The Future Is Not Discovered, It Is Built

Mariana, her therapist, had explained it clearly:“Abigail, your future is not what happened to you, but what you choose to do with it.”

Those words echoed in her mind like a mantra.Life owed her nothing.But she also owed no loyalty to pain.

She had the right to build:

- a future with meaning
- healthy relationships
- a free life
- her own purpose
- an identity beyond trauma

It was her time.

First Seed: Listening to Her Desire

Abigail began by asking herself simple questions:

- What do I want to do now?
- Where do I want to be?
- Who do I want to be?
- What kind of life do I deserve?

And for the first time in years, the answer did not come from fear, but from the heart:“I want to be a free woman.”

Free to loveFree to restFree to trustFree to make mistakesFree to dream

That freedom was not about forgetting her past,but about no longer carrying it as a weight.

A Decisive Scene: The Conference That Changed Everything

She was invited to speak at an international conference on healing and resilience.Abigail accepted, though her stomach churned just thinking about it.

The day arrived.The auditorium was full.There were lights, cameras, microphones.

Abigail stepped onto the stage with cold hands.She took a deep breath.She looked at the people before her.And said:

“For many years I thought darkness was my destiny.But I learned that even in the deepest night... a light can be born.”

As she spoke, she saw faces crying, others nodding, others closing their eyes as if her words echoed within them.

Abigail felt the power of her voice.Not a trembling voice of fear, but a firm voice built on truth.

That day she understood:Her story was not her shame.It was her strength.And it could also be the strength of others.

Second Seed: Accompanying Others on Their Path

Her organization grew.Volunteers, psychologists, teachers, mothers, young women arrived.Each story was a universe.Each woman, a survivor of something.

Abigail listened.She accompanied.She cared.

But the most powerful realization was that she was not only helping...she was also nourished by each testimony, each embrace, each silent victory.

One young woman told her one day:"Thank you for teaching me that I can believe in myself."

Abigail felt her heart expand.That phrase...was exactly what she had needed to hear as a child.

Third Seed: Choosing Love Without Fear

Love was another chapter in her rebirth.For a long time she avoided it.She feared vulnerability, emotional contact, intimacy.

But one day she met someone who did not want to rush anything.Someone who looked at her as if she were a sunrise.Who listened to her.Who respected her.Who saw her whole.

One afternoon, he told her:"I don't want to save you. I want to walk with you."

And she understood that this was the kind of love she deserved.Not the one that invades, but the one that accompanies.Not the one that demands, but the one that sustains.

For the first time, Abigail allowed someone to come close...not to her wounds, but to her heart.

Fourth Seed: Emotional Freedom

Freedom came in small forms:

- saying "no" without guilt
- sleeping without frequent nightmares
- laughing without fear
- creating routines that nourished her
- protecting her energy
- surrounding herself with healthy people

Freedom was this:feeling at home within herself.

One day, while drinking tea and watching the sunrise from her living room window, she thought:"This is the future I always wanted, even if I didn't know it."

Fifth Seed: The Legacy

Abigail knew her story did not end with her.She was part of something bigger.

In one of her workshops, a young woman asked:"How did you know you were ready to help others?"

Abigail smiled.“The day I stopped being afraid of my own story.”

Trauma no longer defined her.Transformation did.

The Chosen Future

Today, when she thinks of her future, Abigail does not see shadows.She sees paths.Options.Horizons.Possible dreams.

She understands that the future after trauma is not a gift.It is a daily construction.A constant choice.An act of self-love repeated again and again.

And she chooses it.Every day.

Guided Reflection — Chapter 7

Deep Question: How would your life be if you stopped seeing yourself through the lens of pain?

Practical Exercise: Write three affirmations that define who you are now, not who you were in your trauma.

Example:

- “I am brave.”
- “I am enough.”
- “I am worthy of love and respect.”

Repeat one of them every morning in front of the mirror.

Epilogue: A Message from Faridi

To you, who are reading these words

When I decided to write this book, I never imagined the emotional journey I would embark on.Not only as an author... but as a woman, as a companion, as a human being who deeply believes in the capacity to transform pain into purpose.

Abigail’s story was born from many other stories, including my own.From broken voices, from long silences, from gazes that asked for help without uttering a single word.It was born from the embrace I wanted to give when I didn’t arrive in time.It was born from love for those who still don’t know they can heal.

Abigail is not fiction.Abigail is a representation.She is an echo.She is a mirror.She is the silent strength of so many people who survive difficult memories every day and still find ways to keep living, to keep dreaming, to keep loving.

If you are reading this, I want to speak directly to you.

You Deserve a Full Life

Perhaps you have felt that your story defines you.Perhaps you have believed that what you lived condemns you to a dark future.Perhaps you have carried guilt that was never yours, wounds you did not choose, silences that suffocated you.

And yet, you are here.Breathing.Reading.Searching for something more.That is already a victory.

Remember This

You deserve a full life.You deserve a clean future.You deserve love, respect, and peace.You deserve to rest without fear.You deserve to trust again, to laugh, to feel hope.

No matter what has happened.Your dignity cannot be taken away.

Your Story Matters — And So Does Your Voice

One of the deepest truths I have learned is this:The voice is never lost.It only hides, waiting for a safe place to come out.

This book does not intend to force you to speak, but it does want to offer you that safe space.Here you can cry, breathe, get angry, remember, forget, rebuild.Here you can be you.

Your story matters.Not because it defines your destiny, but because it reveals your strength.And your voice, no matter how soft, has power.A power that can free you and, someday, even inspire others.

Healing Is Possible — Even If It Takes Time

Healing is not linear.It has curves, pauses, returns, advances, stumbles, openings and closures.

There will be days when you feel you move forward miles...And others when you step back only a little.

Do not judge yourself.Do not punish yourself.Do not give up on yourself.

Healing is not forgetting.Healing is remembering in a new way.It is looking back without it hurting the same.It is reclaiming your power, your boundaries, your voice, your light.

And every person deserves that path.You too.

The Future Is Open — And You Can Choose It

Trauma has no right to write your future.That is your task, your choice, your right.

Your future can be full of:

- self-love
- healthy relationships
- emotional peace
- meaningful projects
- moments of joy
- new paths
- dreams you haven't yet imagined

Do not be afraid to dream.Do not be afraid to build.Do not be afraid to be reborn.

Abigail did it.And you can too.

Thank You

Thank you for reading this story.Thank you for accompanying Abigail.Thank you for allowing my words to come close to your life.

If something in this book touched your soul,if a phrase accompanied you,if a chapter made you breathe differently...then this work has already fulfilled its mission.

I leave you with an embrace full of respect, love, and hope.

You are not your past. You are your rebirth.

With affection and truth,**Faridi Abdul Hamid**